



# MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION

McKinney-Vento State Conference, 2016

Presented by:

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**HOMELESS STUDENTS NEED HOUSING, FOOD, TRANSPORTATION AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO STAY IN AND SUCCEED IN SCHOOL.**



**#UNSEENSTUDENTS**

Source: Hidden in Plain Sight: Homeless Students in America's Public Schools [www.GradNation.org/Homeless](http://www.GradNation.org/Homeless)



**HOMELESS STUDENTS NEED SUPPORT, A KIND WORD, A NONJUDGMENTAL EAR AND SOME ATTENTION. THEY NEED TO KNOW THAT THERE IS A WORLD OUT THERE FOR THEM IF THEY PERSEVERE.**

**#UNSEENSTUDENTS**

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**94% OF HOMELESS STUDENTS DON'T HAVE A CONSISTENT PLACE TO CALL HOME.**

**50% HAVE SLEPT IN A CAR, PARK, ABANDONED BUILDING, BUS STATION OR PUBLIC PLACE.**

**#UNSEENSTUDENTS**



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# **MCKINNEY-VENTO**


- **Addresses the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.**
- **Originally passed in 1987**
- **Reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**
- **Works hand-in-hand with Title IA and other federal education programs.**



# WHO IS HOMELESS????

The McKinney-Vento Act (Section 725) defines “homeless children and youth” (school-age and younger) as:

**Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:**

- **Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.**
  - **Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.**
  - **Living in emergency or transitional shelters.**
  - **Abandoned in hospitals.**
  - **Awaiting foster care placement.**
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- ❖ Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- ❖ Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- ❖ Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.
- ❖ The term *unaccompanied youth* includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- ❖ This would include runaways living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing; children and youth denied housing by their families (sometimes referred to “throwaway children and youth”); and school-age unwed mothers living in homes for unwed mothers because they have no other housing available.

*In determining whether or not a child or youth is homeless, consider the relative permanence of the living arrangements. Determinations of homelessness should be made on a case-by-case basis.*

# Nighttime Residence

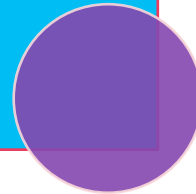
- Used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis

**Regular**



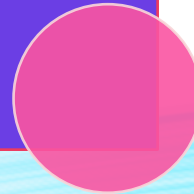
- Stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.

**Fixed**



- Sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

**Adequate**



# UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

**Unaccompanied youth are young people who meet the definition of homeless and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.**

## **Liaisons must:**

- Help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youth's wishes, and inform the youth of his or her appeal rights.
- Train school personnel of the specific needs of runaway and homeless youth.
- Develop caretaker forms, self-enrollment forms for unaccompanied youth, and other forms to replace typical proof of guardianship; such forms should be crafted carefully so they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment.
- Coordinate with other agencies to ensure policies do not create educational barriers.
- Provide unaccompanied youth the opportunity to enroll in diversified learning opportunities, such as vocational education, credit-for-work programs, and flexible school hours.
- Provide a "safe place" and trained mentor at school for unaccompanied youth to access as needed.
- Permit exceptions to school policies on class schedules, tardiness, absences and credits to accommodate the needs of unaccompanied youth.
- Assist with credit accrual and recovery.





# **WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN IDENTIFYING HOMELESS YOUTH**

- **Parents and unaccompanied homeless youth**
- **School secretaries, registrars, and enrollment staff**
- **School Resource Officers (SROs) and attendance officers**
- **Program administrators (Special Ed, Child Nutrition, Title I, Migrant, Early Childhood)**
- **Principals and teachers**
- **Transportation directors and bus drivers**
- **Student services staff**
- **Shelter-based school liaisons**



# **HOMELESS LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES**

**In 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(6)(A), the McKinney-Vento Act lists the responsibilities of the local liaison. The law states local liaisons will ensure that:**

- homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other agencies;**
- homeless children and youth enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school;**
- homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start programs and preschool programs administered by the LEA, as well as referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services;**

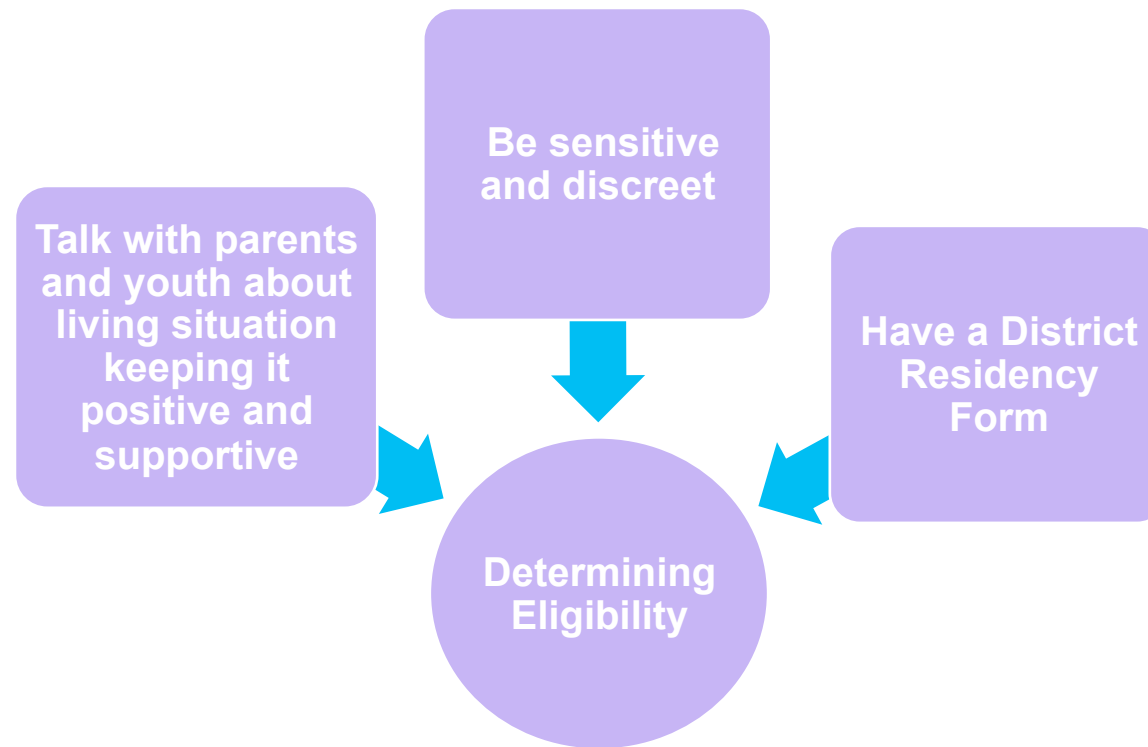
- the parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated where they receive services, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
- enrollment disputes are mediated according to local, state, and federal policies; and
- the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin.



## STRATEGIES TO FOLLOW WHEN LEARNING MORE ABOUT A FAMILY'S OR YOUTH'S LIVING ARRANGEMENT:

- Use a standard **enrollment form** that asks about the family's or youth's living situation to gather initial information. If the form indicates that the student may be homeless, ask additional questions as needed to get a better sense of the family's or youth's circumstances.
- **Avoid** using the word "homeless," as the stigma associated with the word may lead parents or youth to insist they are not homeless even though their living situation would fit the McKinney-Vento definition.
- Explain that the purpose for asking questions about their living arrangement is to determine if they are eligible for some additional educational supports and request that the parent/guardian or youth provide you with the information needed to make a determination. Understand that families or youth may be hesitant to answer questions for various reasons that include a desire for privacy, concerns related to domestic violence, or fear of losing their housing or custody of their children; however, in most cases you will have enough information to make a determination.

- Do not contact persons or agencies outside the school system to obtain information about the student's living situation; this likely would violate the family's or youth's privacy and dignity as well as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For example, do not contact landlords, public housing agencies, or law enforcement to verify living situations.
- Respect the family's or youth's privacy by talking to them in a private space where other students and faculty members cannot overhear the conversation.





# REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOLS

The McKinney-Vento Act provides certain rights for homeless students. They include waiving certain requirements such as proof of residency when students are enrolling and allowing categorical eligibility for certain services, such as free textbooks. The Act also states:

- Homeless students may attend their school of origin or the school where they are temporarily residing;
- Homeless students must be provided a written statement of their rights when they enroll and at least two times per year;
- Homeless students may enroll without school, medical, or similar records;
- Homeless students have a right to transportation to school;
- Students must be provided a statement explaining why they are denied any service or enrollment;
- Students must receive services, such as transportation, while disputes are being settled;
- Students are automatically eligible for Title I services;
- School districts must reserve a portion of Title IA funds to serve homeless students;
- School districts must review and revise policies that provide barriers to homeless students;
- Schools must post information in the community regarding the rights of homeless students, in schools and other places that homeless families may frequent; and
- School districts must identify a McKinney-Vento Liaison to assist students



# **BARRIERS TO EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

- **Poor health, fatigue, hunger**
- **Emotional trauma, depression, anxiety**
- **Stereotypes and lack of awareness**
- **Under-identification**
- **High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity.**
- **Enrollment requirements (school records, health records, proof of residence, guardianship)**
- **Lack of transportation**
- **Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.**

# CAUSES AND IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS

- **Lack of Affordable Housing**
- **Chronic Poverty**
- **Health Problems**
  - Addiction, Mental Health**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Natural and other disasters**
- **Abuse/Neglect/family dysfunction (unaccompanied youth)**

- **High incidences of acute and chronic illnesses, depression and anxiety.**
- **Homelessness in early childhood is associated with poor classroom engagement and poor social skills in early elementary school.**
- **The achievement gaps between homeless and low-income elementary students tend to persist, and may even worsen over time.**
- **A youth who experiences homelessness is 87% more likely to drop out of school.**

# COMMON SIGNS OF HOMELESSNESS

*NOTE: WHILE THESE ARE CONSIDERED COMMON SIGNS, PLEASE RECOGNIZE THAT THEY ONLY OFFER GENERAL GUIDANCE. THERE IS SIGNIFICANT VARIABILITY WITHIN THE SCHOOL-AGE HOMELESS POPULATION. INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS MAY DIFFER SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THE FOLLOWING GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS*


## *Lack of Continuity in Education*

- Attendance at many different schools
- Lack of records needed to enroll
- Inability to pay fees
- Gaps in skill development
- Mistaken diagnosis of abilities
- Poor organizational skills

## *Poor Health/Nutrition*

- Lack of immunizations and/or immunization records
- Unmet medical and dental needs
- Respiratory problems
- Skin rashes
- Chronic hunger (may hoard food)
- Fatigue (may fall asleep in class)



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- **Transportation and Attendance Problems**
  - **Erratic attendance and tardiness**
  - **Numerous absences**
  - **Lack of participation in after-school activities**
  - **Lack of participation in field trips**
  - **Inability to contact parents**

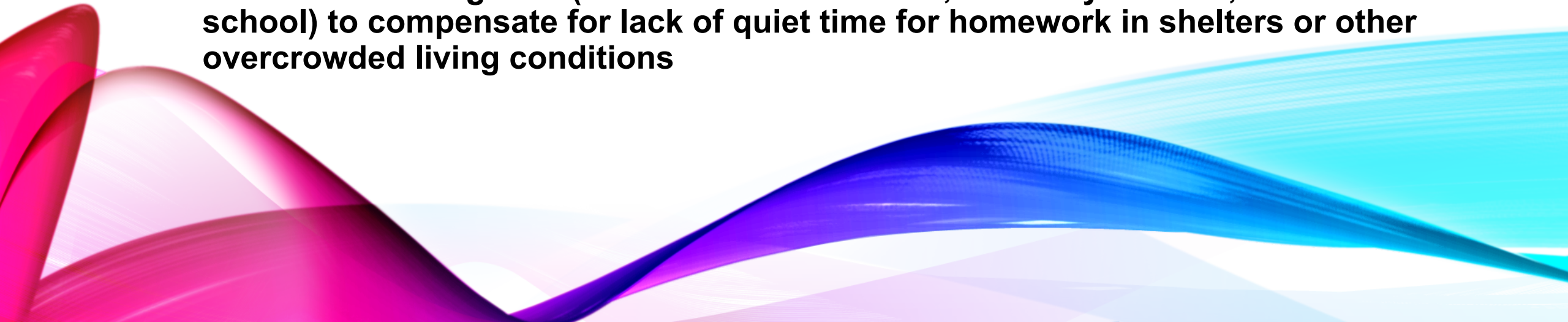
- **Poor Hygiene**
- **Lack of shower facilities/washers, etc.**
- **Wearing same clothes for several days**
- **Inconsistent grooming**

# **TITLE I SET-ASIDE ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

- **Items of clothing, particularly if necessary to meet a school's dress or uniform requirement**
- **Clothing and shoes necessary to participate in physical education classes**
- **Student fees that are necessary to participate in the general education program**
- **Personal school supplies such as backpacks and notebooks**
- **Birth certificates necessary to enroll in school**
- **Immunizations**

Food

- **Medical and dental services**
- **Eyeglasses and hearing aids**
- **Counseling services to address anxiety related to homelessness that is impeding learning**
- **Outreach services to students living in shelters, motels, and other temporary residences**
- **Extended learning time (before and after school, Saturday classes, summer school) to compensate for lack of quiet time for homework in shelters or other overcrowded living conditions**



- **Tutoring services, especially in shelters or other locations where homeless students live**
- **Parental involvement specifically oriented to reaching out to parents of homeless students**
- **Fees for AP and IB testing**
- **Fees for SAT/ACT testing**

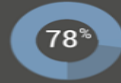




# RESOURCES

- NCHE homeless education awareness information [http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/aw\\_homeless\\_ed.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/aw_homeless_ed.php)
- **National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEH CY)**  
<http://www.naehcy.org/>
- *Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit*  
[http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/liaison\\_toolkit.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/liaison_toolkit.php)

# Being homeless doesn't just mean living in shelters...



of formerly homeless students surveyed say homelessness was something they experienced more than once.



say they were homeless both with a parent or guardian and alone.



stayed with other people rather than in one consistent place they called home.



slept in a car, park, abandoned building, bus station or other public place.

Learn what matters. Get involved.  
[GradNation.org/Homeless](http://GradNation.org/Homeless)

**HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT**

#UnseenStudents

**HOMELESS STUDENTS IN AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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